INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State ACTION COPY

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Info

R 171255Z JUL 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
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S E C R E T SAIGON 1232

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1967 JUL 17 AM 10 44

EXDIS

REF: SAIGON 1164, 1082

1. I SAW THIEU MORNING OF JULY 16. WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF DELAY IN MARCON' ARRIVAL FOR TALK OF OVER AN HOUR AT THIEU'S HOME NEAR THE AIRPORT.

2. I OPENED OUR TALK WITH GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE ELECTION AND REVIEWED WITH HIM AGIN THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING THE ELECTION CLEAN AND ABOVE SUSPICION. I EMPHASIZED THAT ALL INVOLVED SHOULD BE ABLE TO FEEL THAT THE CAMPAIGN AND THE BALLOTING HAD BEEN FAIR AND HONEST, THAT THE CANDIDATES HAD EQUAL ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION AND INFORMATION MEDIA AND WERE NOT SUBJECTED TO UNFAIR CENSORSHIP IN THE PRESS.

3. THIS LED ME TO RAISE THE SUBJECT OF OBSERVERSAND I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ADIVSAMLE TO INVITE INTERNATIIONALL OBSERVERS TO VIEW BOTH THE CAMPAIGN AND THE ACTUAL BALLOTING. HE AGREED AND SAID THAT THEY WERE PLANNING TO ASK UN SYG U THANT TO SEND UN OBSERVERS. HE NOTED THAT THE GVN HAD SENT SUCH AN IVITIATION TO SYG LAST YEAR WITH RESPECT TO THE CA ELECTIONS BUT U THANT HAD DECLINED. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AWARE OF THIS BUT I TOUGHT THAT ANOTHER INVITIATION TO THE UN WAS A GOOD MOVE REGARDLESS. I ADDED THAT I THOUGHT HE MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER INVITIATIONS TO OTHER GROUPS AS FOR EXAMPLE PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE TROOP CONTRIBUTING NATIONS OR FROM OTHER FREE WORLD COUNTRIES. I MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY THE PROPOSAL BY SENATOR JAVITS (STATE'S 7337) AND OTHER PROPOSALS FOR CONGRESSIONAL OBSERVERS. THIEU SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA AND HOPED THAT SUCH GROUPS WOULD COME. IN ADDITION HE SAID THEY OF COURSE INTENDED TO INVITE THE PRESS.

4. MENTIONING THE GREAT PROLIFERATION OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES I ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT ANY OF THE TICKETS WERE LIKELY TO WITHDRAW. HE SAID HE DIDN'T KNOW BUT HE THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT SOME WOULD BE DISQUALIFIED. WITH RESPECT TO "BIG" MINH'S CANDIDACY HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE RESOLVED BY THE FINDING THAT "BIG"MINH'S RUNNING MATE, TRAN NGOC LIENG, HAD BEEN A FRENCH DITIZEN FOR FIVE YEARS AND THUS ENELEIGIBLE. HE SAID THEY APPARENTLY HAD GOOD EVIDENCE OF THIS.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Jean Ingulsby DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (S)
E.O. 12356 EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

DECLASSIFIED

5. CONTINUING CONCERNING "BIG" MINH, THIEU SAID THAT "BIG" MINH'S CANDIDACY WAS REALLY MOTIVATED BY HIS DESIRE TO RETURN TO VIET-NAM AND THE CANDIDACY WAS A DEVICE HE WAS USING TO GET BACK. THEIU SAID IF "BIG " MINH WERE ASSURED (AS HE WOULD BE) THAT HE COULD RETURN TO VIET-NAM AFTER SEPTEMBER 3 THAT HE BELIEVED THAT WOULD SATISFY HIM. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN BANGKOK BY ASSURING "BIG" MINH INFORMALLY THAT THIS WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING ALSO. THIEU SAID HE THOUGHT THAT "BIG" MINH 'S CANDIDACY HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY THE AN QUANG BUDDHISTS, THAT HE FELT EVIDENCE OF THIS WAS THE FACT THAT "BIG" MINH HADN'T NAMED HIS OWN VICE PRESIDENT BUT THAT IT HAD BEEN DONE BY SUPPORTERS HERE. IF HIS SUSPICIONS WERE CORRECT THERE MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN TROUBLE HAD "BIG" MINH RETURNED, INCLUDING DEMONSTRATIONS AND OTHER DISORDERS.

6. I THEN ASKED THIEU HOW HE SAW THE FUNCTIONING OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR BETWEEN HIMSELF AND KY IN THE FUTURE. I SAID I ASSUMED THAT KY WAS NOT INTERESTED IN BEING A FIGUREHEAD . IT WAS OUR VIEW THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT IN THE INTEREST OF SOUTH VIET-NAM AND OF OUR MUTUAL OBJECTIVES THAT THE RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST BETWEEN THEIU AND KY SHOULD CONTINUE AND THAT IN WHATEVER ARRANGEMENT MIGHT BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THEM EVERYONE'S TALENTS SHOULD BE UTILIZED. I ADDED THAT AS A TEAM THEY HAD BEEN CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE PROGRESS AND THE INCREASED STABILITY OF THE LAST TWO YEARS AND IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY SOULD TEGETHER CONTINUE TO BUILD ON WHAT HAD ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

7. THIEU AGREED. HE SAID HE EXPECTED TO DIVIDE RESPONSIBILITY WITH KY AND THAT IN THE FUTURE, AS THEY HAD IN THE PAST, THEY WOULD WORK TOGETHER ON A BISIS OF MUTUAL TRUST. HE SAID HE ENVISAGED A BROADLY-BASED GOVERNMENT WITH A CIVILIAN PRIME MINISTER AND CIVILIAN CABINET MINISTERS WITHTHE EXCEPTION OF DEFENSE AND REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT WHICH HE FELT SHOULD BE HEADED BY MILITARY MEN. HE WANTED PERSONALLY TO GIVE MORE ATTENTION IN THE REORGANIZATION OF ARVN AND TO THE PROBLEMS OF PACIFICATION. HE APRTICULARLY FEELS THAT CORPS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE SECURITY ASPECT OF PACIFICATION AND EH THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT PROVE DESIRABLE TO HOLD BI-WEEKLY SIMINARS WITH RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS AS A MEANS OF STIMULATING INTEREST AND CHECKING ON PROGRESS.

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6. WITH REPECT TO KY'S ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT THIEU WAS NOT SPECIFIC BEYOND SAYING THAT HE PLANNED TO DIVIDE THE WORK OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS WITH KY. HE SAID KY COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE CAMPAIGN AND AFTERWARDS. HE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN EXPLAINING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO THE PEOPLE AND ENLISTING THEIR SUPPORT. HE SAID HE ENVISAGED A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN HIMSELF, KY AND WHOEVER SHOULD BE PRIME MINISTER. HE MADE NO MENTION OF ANY WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH KY.

(#) IN CONCLUDING, THIEU SAID THAT WE (HE, KY AND I SHOULD GET TOGETHER FREQUENTLY AND DISCUSS OUR MUTUAL PROBLEMS FREELY. I MENTIONED THE LUNCHEON WHEN HE, KY AND GENERAL VIEN CAME TO MY HOUSE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO(SAIGON 28409) AND MET WITH AMBASSADOR LOCKE, GENERAL WESTMORELAND AND ME AND THAT I HAD FOUND THIS MOST USEFUL. HE AGREED AND SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS THE TYPE OF THING WE SHOULD DO MORE FREQUENTLY IN THE FUTURE.

10 COMMNET: THIEU WAS IN A RELAXED AND FORTHCOMING MOOD. HE SHOWED NO GREAT STRAIN AND I WAS INTERESTED IN OBSERVING THAT AT THE AIRPORT DURING THE MARCOS VISIT HE AND KY SEEMED TO GET ALONG TOGETHER WELL, JOKING AND LAUGHING IN A RELAXED MANNER. WHILE KY HAS TOLD ME TWICE THAT HE HAS A DIFINITE UNDERSTANDING WITH THEIU AS TO HIS ROLE IN A NEW GOVERNMENT AND BUI DIEM CONFIRMED ITS EXISTENCE WE CONTINUE TO GET REPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT KY IS NOT YET SATISFIED AS TO THIEU'S COMMITMENT TO THE UNDERSTANDING. THIS IS A SITUATION WHICH WILL NEED CAREFUL WATCHING AND NURSING.

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(#) OMISSION, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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CORRECTION ISSUED
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